

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /101 W

----- 012379

R 231236Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5664

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

UNCLAS DUBLIN 0671

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, EI, UK(NI)

SUBJ: IRISH REACTION TO NI AGREEMENT FOR PHASING-IN COUNCIL
OF IRELAND

REF: DUBLIN 652

1. REACTING TO ANNOUNCEMENT YESTERDAY FROM BELFAST THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNCIL OF IRELAND WOULD BE PHASED OVER PERIOD OF SEVERAL YEARS, IRISH PRIME MINISTER COSGRAVE TOLD DAIL MAY 22 THAT WHILE HE WELCOMED NI EXECUTIVE UNITY ON PRINCIPLES EMBODIED IN SUNNINGDALE COMMUNIQUE, GOI WOULD HAVE PREFERRED AGREEMENT WITHIN EXECUTIVE TO JOIN IN IMPLEMENTING ALL ASPECTS OF COUNCIL OF IRELAND IMMEDIATELY. COSGRAVE SAID GOI UNDERSTOOD REASONS WHICH MADE IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION IMPOSSIBLE AND BELIEVED IT NECESSARY TO FACE REALITY OF PRESENT EXTREMELY SERIOUS SITUATION AND IN GREAT NEED FOR FIRM BASIS FOR PEACEFUL PROGRESS. COSGRAVE CONCLUDED THAT GOI WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY TO COOPERATE IN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF COUNCIL OF IRELAND ON BASIS PROPOSED BY EXECUTIVE.

2. OPPOSITION LEADER LYNCH EXPRESSED KEEN DISAPPOINTMENT AT WHAT APPEARED TO BE WATERING DOWN OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT. HE SAID IT WAS DEPARTURE FROM WHAT IS "ASSERTION
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AND POLICY OF FIANNA FAIL PARTY THAT IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE

HAVE AN INALIENABLE RIGHT TO DECIDE THEIR OWN
POLITICAL DESTINY."

HOWEVER, LYNCH SAID "WE RECOGNIZE NEED FOR MAINTENANCE OF
POWER SHARING EXECUTIVE IN NI AND ARE ANXIOUS TO SEE IT
PROCEED." LYNCH THUS DID NOT INDICATE THAT FIANNA FAIL WOULD
SUPPORT NEW ARRANGEMENT BUT ALSO DID NOT INDICATE THAT HIS PARTY
OPPOSED MAINTENANCE OF EXECUTIVE.

3. MEDIA REACTION WAS MIXED. IRISH INDEPENDENT RECOGNIZED
THAT PHASING-IN OF COUNCIL WILL BE REGARDED AS A "CLIMB
DOWN" BUT NOTED THAT SDLP HAD ACCEPTED IT AND THAT THEY WERE THE
"EXPERTS" ON THE SITUATION. INDEPENDENT SAID "IF THEY
AGREE --- THEN WHO ARE WE TO DISAGREE WITH THEM." IRISH TIMES
WAS MORE CYNICAL, POINTING OUT THAT MINORITY IN NI HAD HAD TO
GIVE IN ONCE AGAIN; HOWEVER, TIMES GAVE CREDIT FOR STEADFASTNESS
OF SDLP. OPPOSITION IRISH PRESS, WHICH IS MORE REPUBLICAN THAN
JACK LYNCH, DESCRIBED NEW ARRANGEMENT AS "PIGMY", "MEAGER
AND MISERLY" COUNCIL, AND CRITICIZED FAULKNER, SDLP, BRITISH
AND DUBLIN GOVERNMENTS, NOTING THAT LATTER WAS PREPARED TO
SEE "POSTPONEMENT FOR YEARS OF THE ONE GREAT ASSET OF
SUNNINGDALE THAT WOULD BRING ABOUT INTERMINGLING OF
POLITICIANS OF ALL SHADES."

4. FOR ANALYSIS OF REASONS BEHIND GOI ACCEPTANCE OF
PHASING-IN OF SUNNINGDALE SEE REFTTEL. MOORE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, TREATY RATIFICATION, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT, COMMUNIQUE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974DUBLIN00671
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740129-0449
From: DUBLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740524/aaaaauwn.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: DUBLIN 652
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 OCT 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 OCT 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <09 JAN 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IRISH REACTION TO NI AGREEMENT FOR PHASING-IN COUNCIL OF IRELAND
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, EI, UK, (COSGRAVE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005